

WASHINGTON DATELINE

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN
ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

In one of his most dramatic press conferences to date, Dr. Henry Kissinger talked about the future of the Mideast in view of his unsuccessful 16-day mission there. He stated that the step-by-step approach, pursued by the United States attempted to separate the Mideast problem into individual -- and therefore -- manageable segments.

"That approach has now suffered a setback and the Mideast issues have to be dealt with comprehensively, under more difficult circumstances," he said. "A moment of potentially great danger is not the time to assess blame between the parties, or to indulge in recrimination. We need a calm appraisal of the situation and the U.S. policy best suited to the new conditions."

He said that both sides made a serious effort and they didn't succeed in bridging their differences.

The Secretary of State -- looking tired and grim -- summed up the latest U.S. position:

With the end of the step-by-step approach, we face a period of more complicated international diplomacy. Consequently, a reassessment of policy -- ordered by President Ford -- is essential.

The dangers which produced the need for progress towards peace are still with us. Therefore, we're determined to continue the search for peace in the Mideast. We're prepared to

go to Geneva.

The U.S. is prepared to consider any other approach acceptable to the parties.

The U.S. remains fully committed to the survival of Israel.

The search for peace can be nurtured only in an atmosphere of calm. The parties involved in the Mideast conflict thus have a responsibility to moderate words and deeds, and to refrain from threatening acts.

All outside powers have a responsibility to exercise restraint and to follow a course of moderation.

Dr. Kissinger said he can't assign any particular cause for the breakdown of the talks. "I think that the major reason for the breakdown of the negotiations was intrinsic to the negotiations themselves; but the surrounding circumstances were certainly not favorable."

Asked if the reassessment of U.S. policy toward the whole Mideast is aimed at prompting Israel to adopt a more relaxed or less intransigent negotiating posture, he replied that there are no negotiations going on now and therefore "we'd have no concrete proposals to make to Israel, even if she asked us what negotiating posture it should adopt."

The Secretary of State stressed that the assessment of our policy is not directed against Israel. "It is not designed to induce Israel to alter any particular policy," he said.

As for aid to Israel, he said that the U.S. will make a decision on the basis of our national objectives and on the basis that we remain committed to the survival of Israel. "Whatever conclusions we come to will be submitted to Congress, and Congress can make its in-

dependent judgment," he added.

Asked if he thinks there'll be a new war in the Mideast, he said that there is always a danger of that as long as the parties have such irreconcilable differences. "We don't believe a war is inevitable," he said. "We believe a war would involve the greatest dangers to all of the countries concerned, as well as serious dangers of great powers involvement."

As for interpretations of the reassessment of Mideast policy -- that possibly Israel was at fault for the breakdown of the talks and should somehow be punished by reduction in aid or some other manner, he observed:

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